competitiveness in the world markets. Some of these are given below :-

* Ministry of Commerce and Industry have prepared a Medium Term Export Strategy for various sectors including Gem and Jewellery sector;

* Duty concessions on import of coloured gemstones;

* The GJEPC promotes the image of Indian gems and jewellery abroad through advertisements, publicity and participation in international fairs, organising buyer-seller meets and direct approach to market retailers;

* The GJEPC identifies new markets by organising market study through consultants. It also deputes Indian designers to various international trade fairs and exhibitions to study the latest trend in designes;

* The GJEPC promotes export of Hallmark Jewellery from India so that customers abroad can be assured of quality and purity of Indian made Jewellery; and

* Government have provided funds to set up the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Centre of Jewellery Design and Manufacture at Surat to give a fillip to jewellery design and manufacture.

Free trade with Bangladesh

2709. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMAD KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bangladesh has recently expressed its interest to have free trade with India;

(b) whether it has also urged to have joint ventures with India;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps contemplated by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO) : (a) During the 6th Meeting of the India-Bangladesh Joint Economic Commission (JEC) held in Dhaka on July 14-15, 2003, the two sides agreed that the Joint Working Group at the level of Joint Secretaries from the two Ministries

of Commerce would meet in Dhaka by the middle of October, 2003 to begin negotiations on a bilateral Free Trade Agreement.

(b) Yes, Sir

(c) During the India-Bangladesh JEC Meeting held in Dhaka on July 14-15, 2003, the Bangladesh side requested the Indian side to facilitate investment in several specified prospective areas.

(d) The problems relating to India's joint ventures with Bangladesh, as and when reported, are taken up for resolution. During the last India-Bangladesh JEC meeting also, India stressed the need for expeditious resolution of problems in order to generate further confidence among the Indian investors.

Export of spices

2710. SHRI SURENDRA LATH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the different kinds of spices being exported from the country;

(b) the amount earned by this export during the last three years; and

(c) the States from where these spices are procured?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) Major spice items exported from the country include Pepper, Cardamom (Small), Cardamom (Large), Chilli, Ginger, Turmeric, Coriander, Cumin, Celery, Fennel, Fenugreek, Garlic, Nutmeg & Mace, Vanilla, Mint oil, Spice oils and Oleoresins etc.

(b) Export realisation during the last three years is as follows :-

Year	Amount (Rs. crores)
2000-01	1833.53
2001-02	1625.35
2002-03	1790.00

Source: Spices Board

(c) Major spice supplying States for export are Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Punjab.